

Andrew Jackson, January 4, 1814, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

ORDER TO ARREST WILLIAM M. KIRBY.

January 4, 1814

Major Bradley officer of the day having reported,¹ that as he went round the guards for the protection of the camp, that he found, guard no 3, who was commanded by Lieutenant William M. Kirby of Capt Gordons company of the 2 Regt. of Tennessee militia commanded by Genl Isaac Roberts, had abandoned his guard, and that the whole extent of the camp, covered by the protection of guard no 3, was exposed to the enemy. The adjutant General will receive the sword of the above named Lieut. Kirby of the second Regt. of Tennessee militia. he will consider himself under an arrest and conduct [himself] accordingly.

¹ Major Bradley's report, Jan. 4, 1814, is as follows:

"Sir, On visiting my guard at about four OClock P. M. of this day I found neither the officer of the guard (Ensign Gray of the 1st guard, 1st Regt. of Genl. Roberts brigade) nor was there any centinels at their posts, belonging to that Regt.—conceiving it my duty, I hereby report. Yours respectfully"

Andrew Jackson Major Genl

Head quarters January 4th. 1814.

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whereupon James W Sittler acting adjutant general to the army from the State of Tennessee commanded by Major General Andrew Jackson that he read the above order to the said Lt. Kirby and demanded his sword—when the sd. Lt Wm. M Kirby refused to deliver it, and observed it would protect him to the Tennessee river and that he was not under the command of Genl. Jackson, that he was a freeman.

J W Sittler Adjt Genl

upon the above report the commanding Genl gave the following order—To the adjutant General James W. Sittler

Head quarters Fort Strother

January 4th. 1814. you will forthwith order the guards to parade, with Capt John Gordons company of Spies, and forthwith proceed to arrest the said Lieutenant William Kirby of guard no. 3 of Capt Gordons company 2nd. Regt of the West Tennessee militia belonging to the Brigade commanded by Brigadier Genl Isaac Roberts now in the service of the united States, and in case, you are attempted to be opposed by force, oppose force to force, and arrest him at all hazards and consequence. Spare the effusion of blood if Possible, but mutiny must be put down and him arrested. I say positively arrested at all hazard if your force is sufficient.

Andrew Jackson Major Genl2

2 Up to this point the order is in Jackson's handwriting, but from this place to the end it is in Reid's.

In pur[su]ance of the above order, I ordered the guards and Capt John Gordons company to parade and procede forthwith to arrest the said Wm M Kerby. On my arrival at his quarter, he was not to be found; I proceded to search the lines (who were all paraded) for him I found him at the head of his company marching off, I ordered him to “halt,” this order

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was not obeyed, I then ordered the guard to stop him, and demanded his sword this he refused to give, I then gave orders to the guard to fire if he did not immediately surrender his sword; upon this he the said Lieut Wm M Kerby cocked his gun, and some of the soldiers cocked theirs also. Genl Jackson came up and personally deman[d]ed his the said Leut Wm M Kerbys sword, this was not complied with. The Genl then levelled his pistol at the said Lieut Kerby; I stept between the Genl and said Kerby, and again demanded his sword, and observed to him that he had better give me the sword, and save the effusion of blood. At this time Dr Taylor came runing up to Kerby and took his sword from out of the scabbard, and presented it to me; I refused to recieve the sword from Doctor Taylor, and observed to him (Dr Taylor) hand it to Lieut Kerby, and let him give it to me; upon this Dr Taylor returned the sword to the sd Kerby, and he then gave me his sword. I ordered the guard to take the sd Kerby and keep him under a strong guard untill further orders and he is now in custody.

J W Sittler Adjut Genl